

**What BN really stands for**  
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On the face of it this is painfully obvious, at least to most Malaysians. BN stands for Barisan Nasional, the coalition that has ruled them increasingly crookedly and incompetently for the past half-century.

But as 'Barisan Nasional' means 'National Front', the question remains what and who BN is a front for, and how much longer it can get away with all the ugly realities it strives to hide behind its carefully-crafted facade.

How much longer, for example, can some apparently sentient Malaysians keep taking it seriously as 'Barisan Nasional', when, as I pointed-out in a column some months ago, BN is so evidently a front for what could justly be called 'Basiran Nasional'?

I recall that at the time several readers complained of my calling BN 'basi', which I had discovered in my trusty pocket Malay-English dictionary to mean "stale, rotten, out-of-date", on the grounds that it was abusive.

An accusation to which my response was and remains that, after 54 dreary years in power, BN has come to stand for so much that is basi, not to mention buruk and busuk, that it's ridiculous.

And if this plainly evident fact strikes anyone as abusive, or even ABUasive, I'm delighted. BN has subjected Malaysia and Malaysians to such an intolerable burden of abuse, of everything from public funds to human rights and civil liberties that no amount of verbal abuse by me or anyone else can come close to restoring the balance.

Especially in view of the fact that the rot goes on unabated, so that Barisan/Basiran seems to be not just a false front or throwback to the dim, dark ages, but a veritable Barahsan Nasional.

Cancer mutated into conspiracy

A cancer that has grown from barely-detectable beginnings in a formerly apparently benign political coalition, and mutated and metastasised into a malignant criminal conspiracy that threatens the livelihoods and even the lives of Malaysian citizens.

If you think I'm exaggerating in the life-and-death department, take a look at the what BN expects Malaysians to Barinsanely stand for at the hands of their Nasional law-enforcement agencies.

Not only the unexplained, uninvestigated and of course unpunished homicide of 'suspects' in staged 'shoot-outs' and in custody, and charges and counter-charges between senior police and law officers allegedly in league with organised crime, but such dereliction of ordinary, everyday duties that communities have to pay private security organisations to ensure their own and their families' safety, and the fatality rates on Malaysia's pathetically-policed roads are 10 times of those in countries like the UK and Australia.

Then there's BN's legendary standing as Borosan Nasional, extravagantly spending and squandering so much public money on its members and their relatives and cronies as to threaten to reduce the rakyat to ruin.

The prime minister and his shopaholic consort spend fortunes jet-setting around the world and throwing glitzy parties using either public funds or mysteriously-amassed millions of their own. Billions disappear in 'commissions' on submarines, armoured personnel carriers and other 'defence' deals, and countless more billions go missing in 'soft loans', 'bail-outs' and 'development' schemes and scams.

And in case the poor suckers who pay for all this get wise to how wantonly they're being cheated, short-changed, ripped-off, and thus take to complaining or - horror of horrors - avenging themselves at the ballot-box, there's the ultimate expression of what BN stands for, Barisandiwara Nasional.

What a show of shows this is. What a dazzling display of deception, trickery, illusionism and sleight-of-hand. Roll up, roll up and see BN's 'world's best democracy', never mind BN's world-class anti-democratic laws, phoney BN 'reforms', rigged BN electoral system and BN 'transformations' that turn out to be just more of the same old BN transornications.

Tune-in to the BN show-trials of opposition leaders, and selected scapegoats in BN scandals where 'justice' has to be seen to be done by a hand-picked BN judiciary.

Sit through years of fraudulent BN 'inquests' and 'royal commissions' that eventually end but never come to any actual, actionable conclusions.

See, hear and read all the exciting, sordid details of BN allegations against its critics and opponents, and thrill to the thunderous silence about BN crimes and misdeeds in the BN-biased 'news' media.

Chorus of sectarian discord

Feel the peace, love and harmony of a BN-united 1Malaysia, and never mind the dreadful din of the BN-conducted chorus of racial and sectarian discord.

Barisan Nasional is no doubt a front for many more evils than those I've identified among those that BN stands for.

But I'm right on deadline for this column, so I haven't much time to come up with any others. In any case, despite my ownership of the dictionary I mentioned up front, I've pretty well exhausted my store of BN-appropriate Malay words.

Or to put this another way, I'm monolingual or what I guess you could call homotextual in English, unlike many of you readers in Malaysia who, 'homo' being a no-no, are pretty well all heterolingual or even heteroliterate and thus far better-equipped to come up with some more ideas.

But whatever language we all manage to communicate in, I'm sure that the vast majority of us are on the same page when it comes to BN.

Only a 1Malaysiac, 1Malaysiaccomplice or 1Malaysiaccessory would stand for another minute of Barisan, Basiran, Barahsan, Barinsane, Borosan, Barisandiwara or any other kind of Nasional anyone can think of that BN stands for.

With the notable exception, of course, of the words that those of us who can't stand BN for another minute would love to see come true: Buryisan Nasional.

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